

SENIORNET NELSON INC.

DIGITAL IMAGERY GROUP MEETING 24.6.22 - REPORT

Seventeen people attended despite cold, wet weather and some testing positive for Covid. Margaret Davies chaired the meeting. Hans Everts opened with a reference to the meaning of Matariki (celebrated today) with its focus on the past, present and future. The memory of those who have passed on ties in especially with our archival task of ‘heritage’ photos.

A total of 66 photos, taken by DIG members, were shown by Helen Gowland. The *Current topic* of ‘Trafalgar Street’ provided scenes, views, and vignettes of unexpected and unusual interest. Walking down this main street will never be the same again. It has heightened our sense of observation.



Archival photos on the theme of ‘Heritage’ were shown and each person spoke briefly on the personal meaning of the object or scene photographed, which was often moving. Each was observed with respect and understanding – a process which took longer than planned but was important to do.



The main focus in the month's teaching input was on '*Photographing Faces*'. Hans presented handout material (see Pointers below) from Tom Ang's books '*How to photograph absolutely everything*' and '*Digital photographer's handbook*'. Tips on capturing portraits of individual people, family groups, formal situations and animals were followed by an illustration and discussion of photos on the big screen.



Helen Gowland then showed examples of the theme of '*Hidden*' in photos to encourage us to look for surprising, unexpected, and whimsical aspects of our photography.



Both these themes foreshadow next month's photographing tasks for members. Ian Grant also added to the meeting input with further illustrative examples of Snapseed in his Trafalgar photos.

Covid prevented us from seeing Barry's travelogue on the Grand Canyon. However, we enjoyed the humour of animal photos and the coming together of our warm-hearted and enthusiastic group.

Next DIG meeting: Friday July 29th

This meeting will be held in the hall, starting at 1.30 pm. Members are invited to submit photos for two themes, all taken by oneself, and current **or** archival. Theme one is 'Faces' (3 photos, see pointers below), theme two is 'Hidden' (3 photos). Please send all your photos to *Helen Gowland* (helengwln@gmail.com) by *Wednesday evening July 27th* at the latest. Photos submitted after the 27th cannot be included.

Photo themes for August – *Portrait* and *Winter* (both may be archival or current).
Next DIG outing – Monday August 8th – theme *Exploring Nelson* (details later)

Meeting report by Priscilla Everts 1st July 2022.

All members of SeniorNet interested in photography very welcome!

PHOTOGRAPHING FACES – POINTERS

People portraits on sunny days

- *Explore the lighting* – soft light is usually, but not always, best for portraiture because it is kindest to facial features. Bright sunlight can lead to too much shadow on the face.
- *Vary backgrounds* – as you search for the best light for your shot, experiment with different backgrounds as well. A busy background can be interesting or distracting; a plain one may be neutral but dull. Try both to find the best.
- *Consider the format* – Decide how much of the subject you want to show. Full length shots put more emphasis on the clothes and allow the person to express their character through their pose. Closer views naturally emphasize more of the face and its expression.

Family self-portrait

- *Wear the right clothes* – brightly coloured garments may make the skin appear pale and wan. You also should make sure that the clothing of any one person doesn't dominate the picture. Consider your clothes in advance and try to keep the tones similar.
- *Prepare yourselves* – apply a little face powder, even to male members of your family, otherwise the light from the flash will accentuate any shiny areas. Encourage everyone to comb their hair, if possible.
- *Get the location ready* – if you are going to sit on a sofa, move it away from the wall; this ensures there will be no harsh shadows on the wall directly behind you.
- *Use the timer feature* – set the camera on a tripod, line it up, remembering to leave room for yourself to be included. Set the timer to give yourself time to occupy the vacant space. Self-times usually give you a warning just before the exposure, so you don't have to hold frozen grins for a long period of time.

Formal portraiture

- *Relax your subject* – involve your subject in what you are doing from the outset. You can usually get them to relax and trust you by taking a few informal shots and showing them how good they look. That will give them the confidence to go through a more formal shoot.
- *Scout locations* – walk around with the sitter, identifying the best spot for the shoot; you will need good light and an interesting background that is not too loud or busy. Try out a few places to see what works best.
- *Instruct your subject* – encourage the subject to sit or stand straight while still looking natural. Once you begin taking pictures, continue giving instructions, but don't hold a conversation, since that can be too distracting. Think about the subject's position in the frame and try different zoom settings from various distances.
- *Introduce small changes* – if you're happy with your exposure settings, fire a sequence. Ask your sitter to make small adjustments to their pose and expression.

Posed pet portraits

- *Pet in action* – when using a smartphone camera, allow an active pet plenty of space. Be sure to allow for 'shutter lag' - a delay between pressing the button and obtaining exposure.
- *Create a fun shoot* – a static pose does not have to be dull one. Offer the dog a treat, such as a biscuit, to allow it to jump, run and play. Getting the dog to have fun will bring a sparkle to its eye that might otherwise be missing.
- *Seize calm moments* – take the picture when the dog is relaxed and settled. It is easier to get the whole animal sharp and in focus if you opt for a full-length portrait.
- *Studio-style portraits* – the alternative to photographing your pet outdoors is to work indoors. Cover the floor with white card and hang white sheets to create a plain backdrop. Use a long lens setting to avoid the need for a background. Work with light from a large window or rely on your camera's flash. Using electronic flash will enable you to capture the sharpest images of your pet.

Other tips and hints for animal photography

- *Find out at which time of day the animal is normally at its quietest* – consult the owner about when it is best to photograph the animal – it may be just after feeding, for example.
- *Find out what the animal likes* – it may be calmed down by playing music or being allowed to play first and let off steam. A hungry animal may be bad-tempered, but one that has been recently fed may be frisky and want to play. Again, consult the animal's owner.
- *Is it likely to be startled by flash or the sound of the camera?* Check with test firings of the flash at a distance before you approach within striking distance.
- *Always move slowly and steadily and make no sudden noises.* Avoid positioning yourself behind an animal, where it cannot see you.
- *To keep your distance, use a longer focal length than usual.*
- *Let the animal be handled by its favourite person* - it will be calmer and less likely to behave erratically or in an unpredictable manner.

Sources:

Ang, T. 'How to photograph absolutely everything'. London: Penguin Random, 2019. The first 4 sections.

Ang, T. 'Digital photographer's handbook'. London: Dorling Kindersley, 2006. 'Other tips'